An Eastern Garden

In an Eastern city a lovely garden flourished, whose beauty and luxuriance awakened much admiration.

It was the owner's greatest pleasure to watch its growth, as leaf, flower, and tree seemed daily to unfold to brighter bloom.

One morning, while taking his usual stroll through the well-kept paths, he was surprised to find that some blossoms were picked to pieces. The next day he noticed more signs of mischief, and rendered thus more observant he gave himself no rest until he had discovered the culprit.

It was a little trembling bird, whom he managed to capture, and was about to kill in his anger, when it exclaimed:

"Do not kill me, I beg you, kind sir. I am only a wee, tiny bird. My flesh is too little to satisfy you. I would not furnish one-hundredth of a meal to a man of your size. Let me free without any hesitation, and I shall teach you something that will be of much use to you and your friends."

"I would dearly like to put an end to you," replied the man, "for you were rapidly putting an end to my garden. It is a good thing to rid the world of such annoyances. But as I am not revengeful, and am always glad to learn something useful, I shall set you free this time."

And he opened his hand to give the bird more air.

"Attention!" cried the bird. "Here are three rules which should guide you through life, and if you observe them you will find your path made easier:

Do not cry over spilt milk;
do not desire what is unattainable, and
do not believe what is impossible."

The man was satisfied with the advice, and let the bird escape; but it had scarcely regained its liberty, when, from a high tree opposite, it exclaimed:

“What a silly man! The idea of letting me escape! If you only knew what you have lost! But it is too late now.

“What have I lost?” the man asked, angrily.

“Why, if you had killed me, as you intended, you would have found inside of me a huge pearl, as large as a goose’s egg, and you would have been a wealthy man forever.”

“Dear little bird,” the man said in his blandest tones; “sweet little bird, I will not harm you. Only come down to me, and I will treat you as if you were my own child, and give you fruit and flowers all day. I assure you of this most sacredly.”

But the bird shook its head sagely, and replied:

‘What a silly man, to forget so soon the advice which was given to him in all seriousness.

I told you not to cry over spilt milk, and here you are, worrying over what has happened. I urged you not to desire the unattainable, and now you wish to capture me again. And, finally, I asked you not to believe what is impossible, and you are rashly imagining that I have a huge pearl inside of me, when a goose’s egg is larger than my whole body.

You ought to learn your lessons better in the future, if you would become wise,” added the bird, as with another twist of its head it flew away, and was lost in the distance.